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NOTES FROM ROME

More than thirty years ago there was discovered at Anzio on the coast of Latium a fine Greek statue, which, though seen by comparatively few persons, soon became widely known through photographs and under various names, such as The Priestess, The Poetess, or, more vaguely, the Maiden of Anzio. About three years ago, when its purchase by the Italian government was announced, every lover of ancient art was glad, foreseeing its early removal from Anzio to a place more accessible. Not long ago this beautiful work, so mysterious and hitherto incomprehensible, was set up in The National Museum in Rome and one of the first results of its exhibition in a better light is the observation that it is not the statue of a female at all but rather of a youth. This is explained in some detail in the following letter recently addressed to the editor of the London Times by Mrs. Arthur Strong, Assistant Director of the British School at Rome.

Since the discovery of the bronze Charioteer of Delphi, no antique work of art has probably caused so great a sensation, or become so immediately popular, as the statue known by the name of the Fanciulla d'Anzio, purchased two years ago by the Italian Government, and publicly exhibited since October last in the Museo delle Terme.

The statue was the property of Prince Ludovico Chigi, in the grounds of whose villa at Anzio it had been found as far back as 1878. The romantic story of its recovery is well known—how on a stormy December night a landslip disclosed a niche in an antique wall, whence the statue slipped down from a brick pedestal. The statue was briefly described in the Italian archaeological reports of the time, but so long as it remained in the seclusion of the Prince's villa it was seen by only a few, who examined it under difficulties in the dim light of an underground apartment. Even so, however, rumours of its great beauty soon began to transpire, and articles by competent authorities aroused artistic curiosity as to a work pronounced an undoubted Greek original. Great was the excitement, therefore, when it became known that the Italian Government had purchased the mysterious masterpiece.

The statue, which is flat-breasted, was, owing to its long drapery, taken as a matter of course for that of a young girl, and diversely interpreted as a poetess or a priestess, while the style of the workmanship was referred unhesitatingly to the fourth century B. C., and by some traced back to Praxiteles himself. The figure carries against its left side a platter or tray upon which rest what appear to be a woollen roll, a few olive twigs, and the claw of a lion. To the interpretations already before the public Professor Comparetti only ten days ago added that of Cassandra—Cassandra as prophetess with the Apolline attributes; an unfortunate theory, for Loewy had justly pointed out that precisely the prophetic element was absent from the conception: "behind this brow are no profound thoughts, these features reveal no strife of the soul, these lips could utter no fateful answer".

All this time, however, theories of interpretation revolved mainly about the attributes on the tray; and it does not seem to have occurred to any one, even since the statue has been well exhibited at the

Museo delle Terme, to challenge or so much as to raise the question whether, after all, it represents a female. Yet to any one who has studied Greek form it must be obvious that the chest of the so-called 'fanciulla' is male. These strong muscular forms have nothing in common with the small globular breasts which in Greek art are invariably typical of maidenhood. The outline softened by the firm covering flesh is the same as in later statues of Dionysos or Apollo. The powerful neck and arms could never belong to any female figure, but harmonize with the masculine type of breast. Indeed, we may search the whole range of Greek statuary in vain for a female figure with muscular flat breast. Such a conception was entirely alien from Greek art; and of this we have striking proof even in the soft, peculiarly feminine forms with which Greek sculptors invariably endowed the warlike Amazons. The face also, which has been aptly compared to that of the Praxitelean Satyr, is strikingly boyish; the foot, with its broad tread and strong ankle, is male, and so above all is the loose swinging stride of the whole figure. There is a further masculine touch about the throw of the drapery over the left shoulder.

But whom does this young draped male figure represent? To answer the question satisfactorily would need a long article. I can only briefly indicate here that the interpretation of the statue must probably be sought within the cycle of the *galli* or long-robed priests of Cybele, one of whom, an *archi-gallus*, appears in the well-known relief in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, surrounded by the emblems of his office and holding in his left hand a deep bowl full of fruit, the counterpart of the platter carried by the Anzio figure. The woollen roll on the platter has a priestly, the laurel twigs have a lustral significance; the lion claw is presumably the ornamental foot of an *acerra* or incense box. It may be added that the statue of a *gallus* has before this been mistaken for that of a woman. A statue at Chertsey is a case in point, and I have little doubt that active search in our museums would reveal many similar errors.

In my book on Roman Sculpture I had referred the present statue—which at that time I had seen at Anzio, and, like the rest of the world, taken to be that of a girl—to the period of Nero. This was a mistake, though I am by no means prepared to side with those who push it back into the fourth century B.C. I incline rather to agree with a young Italian *savant*, Dr. Cultrera, who attributes the workmanship to the Graeco-Asiatic schools of about the second century. The likeness of the head to those of the Praxitelean Hermes and of the Satyr is undoubted; but Praxitelean, like Skopasian influences, lingered longer in Asia Minor than elsewhere. The drapery is treated in the rapid pictorial manner of a later period. The head and neck are worked in a separate block, a method observed in the Demeter of Knidos at the British Museum. Whatever its precise period, this newly acquired statue of a young priest adds one more precious example to the splendid group of Hellenic works found on Roman soil that numbers the Ludovisi throne and the grand Niobid of pure fifth century style, now boarded up, alas! within the precincts of the Banca Commerciale, and soon, it is rumoured, to take its departure to either Turin or Milan.

I arrived at my present conclusions regarding the sex of the personage represented in the Anzio statue immediately I had seen it in its present position. At

first these conclusions were met with scepticism, so deep-rooted already was the belief that this strong sturdy youth was a tender undeveloped 'fanciulla'; but they are gradually gaining recognition. In fact, precisely as I close this letter, I hear that a communication has appeared in an Italian evening paper to the effect that the statue is that of a boy. The fact is so evident to unbiased eyes that it will doubtless occur independently to many people.

Another interesting item of news from Rome is the fact that Commendatore Boni has sent in his resignation as a member of the Commission for the Zona Monumentale. It will be remembered that a plan was formed a few years ago to bring to light and preserve archaeological remains in the southern part of the city between the porta Capena and the porta Appia. Mr. Boni's plan, as he himself described it to me in the summer of 1908, was to excavate a strip of land about three hundred metres wide along the via Appia in the hope of locating some of the important temples and other buildings known to have been in this quarter. Finally, with due regard for the preservation and accessibility of the ancient monuments, the whole was to be converted into a kind of archaeological promenade. Now, however, the original scheme has been practically abandoned and Mr. Boni, thoroughly dissatisfied with the intentions of his colleagues, has declined any further share in the work. He has no sympathy with the mere conversion of the via San Sebastiano into a wide boulevard and begs to be relieved of a charge which means only grief to himself. At the same time he is ready to continue useful work such as that which has been begun on the Arch of Constantine, or the strengthening of the Neronian aqueduct or the replanting of the waste portions of the Zona.

Thus fails another plan, a comprehensive plan, whose completion was promised for 1911, the year of the Congress and of the great celebration. Historic and archaeological interest must yield to the progress of 'modern improvement'. Before long electric cars will traverse a wide boulevard flanked with artificial gardens and the humble tourist will no longer go on foot to the Baths of Caracalla and the porta Appia.

HARRY LANGFORD WILSON.

REVIEWS

Greek Lands and Letters. By F. G. and A. C. E. Allinson. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co. (1909). \$2.50.

The purpose of this very neat and inspiring book of some 450 pages, fusing the much larger element of Greek life and thought upon its topography, is "to interpret Greek lands by literature, and Greek literature by local associations and physical environment". It is meant primarily as a companion for those many travelers in Greece who "must curtail their visit to a few weeks or months", but the

authors hope that "to a wider range of readers it may prove suggestive in appraising what is vital in our Hellenic heritage".

After an introductory chapter, in which the authors set forth their impressions of the widespread land of real Hellas, and of real Hellenism, submitting in conclusion a vigorous polemic in support of the contention that the ancient Greek was a true lover of Nature, there follow five chapters on Athens, then nine in which we are taken to the west and north through Attica, Eleusis, Aegina, Megara, Corinth, Delphi, Thebes, Boeotia and Thermopylae. The concluding five chapters are devoted respectively to Argolis, Arcadia, Olympia, Messenia and Sparta. An appendix follows, giving the *loci classici* for the quotations made throughout the book. The maps are good; the one in front might better have been of the peninsula only, since we are not taken out of it, and one of ancient Athens would have been more helpful than the very useful map of Piraeus. The illustrations entitled Renan on the Acropolis, After Polygnotus, The Panathenaea Continued, Delphi and the Road to Arachova, and Taygetus add greatly to the attractiveness of the book.

One who has been in Greece for purposes of study readily recalls the eagerness with which he prepared himself for the pleasure and the profit of his journey by steeping himself with all he could contain that bore on the literature, history and topography of the country. There is not one of us who was careless in this regard that does not remember how much better it would have been for us when we left the train at Epanoliosia, for instance, for a tramp about the ruins of Phyle, had we read more in the Hellenica and been able to be, in that way, with Thrasyboulos on that frosty morning when he surprised the Spartans still grooming their horses; or if on the road from Thebes to Delphi, we could have skirted Haliartus with Xenophon's account of Lysander's unhappy taking-off at this place a little clearer in our memories.

It is just there that this piece of joint authorship of Professor Allinson and his wife finds, probably, its greatest value. They have read their literature widely and spread it generously throughout the entire itinerary through which the book takes us. At no place may we tarry without a feast of information being spread before us for our complete enjoyment of the *mise en scène*. Philosophy, literature, history, art, legend, all pass before us again or for the first time, according to our wisdom. It is well that the authors have made their index full and enabled us to find again those nuggets of information they have set like so many gems throughout this personally conducted trip. The book is a literary Baedeker, but very much more literary than Baedeker. The passage describing a possible visit